COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

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TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: James A. Noyes
Director of Public Works

COST ESTIMATES FOR THE LOS ANGELES RIVER AND BALLONA CREEK WATERSHEDS TRASH TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOADS (TMDLs)

The following is an estimate of the capital and maintenance costs to comply with the Los Angeles River and Ballona Creek Trash TMDLs. This report is submitted pursuant to County Counsel's July 25, 2002, letter regarding closed session Item 4, Agenda of July 30, 2002 (continued to August 6).

The Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) approved the Trash TMDLs for the Los Angeles River and Ballona Creek watersheds on September 19, 2001. These TMDLs set a numerical limit of zero for trash being discharged into the receiving waterbodies from the storm drain system by the year 2013. The TMDLs further require that there be a 10 percent reduction in trash annually over a 10-year compliance period totaling a 100 percent reduction.

A concept plan for achieving compliance with the Trash TMDLs has been developed for the unincorporated area by utilizing eight different BMPs in combination to reduce trash being discharged from the storm drain system. These eight BMPs are categorized as either structural or institutional controls. A structural control is a physical device that is attached to the storm drain system, thus modifying the physical characteristics of the system. The structural controls collect trash before or after it has made its way into the storm drain system. Institutional controls are characterized as operational or behavioral controls to reduce trash prior to it reaching the storm drain system. The programs and technology on which we based our concept plan and cost estimate will only achieve an estimated 90 percent reduction in trash discharged to the receiving waters.

Over the 10-year compliance period, the estimated installation cost for structural BMPs is $19 million with an operation and maintenance cost of $24 million for a total of $43 million for the unincorporated areas which make up 6.7 percent of the watersheds' developed area. This extrapolates to an estimated cost of $642 million for both County unincorporated areas and cities in the Los Angeles River and Ballona Creek watersheds. Again, this estimate is based on the assumption that only a 90 percent reduction will be achieved utilizing these state of the technology BMPs.

Achieving a 100 percent reduction as required and defined in the TMDLs will require extensive improvements to the flood control system to prevent a reduction in flood protection due to installation of structural controls. The cost of required modifications will be extensive and cannot be quantified without a comprehensive study. The RWQCB's cost estimate for full compliance with the trash TMDLs ranged up to $2 billion. That estimate is very conservative in our opinion. The City of Los Angeles estimates their 100 percent compliance costs over the 10 years at $736 million. The City makes up 56 percent of the two watersheds.

Public Works has already begun to implement programs to reduce the discharge of trash into the Los Angeles River and Ballona Creek watersheds at a cost of approximately $7 million per year. These programs include doing the base line monitoring required in the TMDLs ($2,000,000) and installing nets, catch basin screens, filters, socks, and other structural devices throughout the flood control system on a pilot program basis.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact Don Wolfe, Assistant Director, at (626) 458-4014.

CT:dh
TRASHTMDLS

cc: Chief Administrative Office
Executive Office